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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002650

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DEPT FOR SCA FOR DAS GASTRIGHT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR JAPAN'S HELP ON POWER

REF: STATE 78445

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Afghanistan's Ambassador in Tokyo, Haron Amin, expressed skepticism on June 11 that Japan would be willing to invest large sums in upgrading Afghanistan's electrical power distribution sector, given Japan's focus to date on funding rural development and the Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG) process. At the same time, he acknowledged that getting electricity to Kabul is one of his government's top three priorities and said he would push for this if directed to do so by his Ministry. Separately, he requested an opportunity to meet with SCA DAS Gastright on the margins of the upcoming DIAG conference in Tokyo to discuss the U.S. counternarcotics program in his country.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Embassy Tokyo political officer met June 11 with Ambassador Amin to share with him Department's view that the GOA should make a high level request for Japanese support in upgrading Kabul's electrical distribution system, and to advise him that Embassy Kabul would be discussing this with GOA officials. Cautioning him that the Japanese have not committed to such assistance, political officer stressed that indications are the Japanese might entertain such a request and that now is an excellent opportunity for the GOA to make an overture.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Amin initially expressed skepticism and asked where such a proposal had originated. He said it sounded like something the U.S. would put forward in order to get out of paying for the electricity system upgrades itself. In addition, he noted, Japan has shown interest in providing assistance to Afghanistan in the fields of rural development, education, and DIAG. How much money would Japan commit to the electricity upgrade, and where would it come from, he asked rhetorically. Ambassador Amin said nothing to indicate he was aware of any previous discussion between the GOA and the Japanese on such a project.

¶4. (C) Political officer responded that whether the GOA elects to make such a request of the Japanese is obviously a decision to be taken in Kabul by the highest levels of the Afghan government. The purpose of our demarche is simply to indicate the Japanese have expressed a willingness to entertain such a request both by their actions -- sending a study team -- and in conversations with U.S. officials. Further, if the government of Afghanistan does decide to approach the Japanese, the United States would provide support. Amin acknowledged that getting electricity to Kabul is one of the GOA's top three priorities, and said that if directed to do so by his government he would make a push for this with the Japanese.

15. (C) Separately, Ambassador Amin said he would like to meet with DAS Gastright on the margins of the upcoming DIAG conference to discuss the counternarcotics program in Afghanistan. He was advised his request would be passed forward.
SCHIEFFER